India's sniper war against civilians

Along the UN-monitored ceasefire line

Chapter 1

Introduction

Nearly a million people live on either side of the heavily militarized UN-monitored ceasefire line dividing the disputed region of Kashmir between Indian and Pakistan-administered areas. In Pakistan- administered Kashmir. In Pakistan-administered Kashmir, over 600,000 people live in areas close to ceasefire line, according to officials in Muzaffarabad, the capital of the region. They say that some 103,000 people live within the 500-metre radius of the ceasefire line and another 506000 people live within two to five-kilometre radius of the ceasefire line. The spread of the population along this ceasefire line is such that in many cases people live right over the border, while some settlements are located close to military positions. They are within the range of Indian artillery, mortar or machine gun fire.

The areas close to the ceasefire line served battle ground between India and Pakistan during 1947-48, 1965 and 1971 wars, causing much damage to the civilian population.

The origin of present hostilities can be traced back to 1988 when an armed struggle in Indian-administered Kashmir got underway. As the insurgency intensified, so did India's punitive strikes in areas close to the ceasefire line, making life miserable for civilians caught in this conflict. The tension escalated even more during Kargil conflict and 18 month military standoff between armies of two countries in 2001 and 2002.

Except for a few years following a 2003 ceasefire along the border, the region has remained a virtual war zone, and hostilities have increased with passing years.

Indian forces mainly use mortars, artillery shells, rockets and sniper guns to target these areas. The fire is nearly always indiscriminate and disproportionate, and almost always hits the civilian population.

According to data collected by Pakistan-administered Kashmir's Revenue Department and Disaster Management Authority (DMA), at least 916 civilians including men, women, children and the elderly have been killed and over 3469 injured due to Indian shelling and firing during the period between 1989-2019. This does not include the figures for Jhelum Valley, Leepa Valley and Neelum Valley for the period between 1989 to1997. Officials say that they are still gathering the details as they lost the part of record in 2005 Earthquake. These areas were the worst affected areas before 2003 ceasefire.

At least 129 of these have been killed and 588 injured since 2015 when hostilities intensified. The tension soared even more after the attack on Indian military camp in Uri on 18 Sept 2016 and Indian claim of surgical strikes in Pakistan-administered Kashmir on Sept 26—a claim vehemently denied by Pakistan.

In 2017, 46 civilians were killed by Indian firing and another 257 wounded, while the number of the deceased and injured persons in 2016 was 41 and 128 respectively, according to the State Disaster Management Authority (SDMA).According to Pakistan army Indian forces carried out 1970 ceasefire violations in 2017.

According to the SDMA only in 2018 30 civilians including 19 men and 11 women were killed, and 173, including 92 men and 81 women, were injured by the Indian attacks across the ceasefire line. Pakistan's foreign ministry spokesperson Dr Mohammad Faisal says that the Indian forces carried out more than 2312 ceasefire violations along the ceasefire line and the Working Boundary in 2018.

Details of casualties and injuries by Indian firing at the LOC in Azad Jammu & Kashmir (2016-18)				
Sr. No	District	Year	Martyr	Injured
1	Neelum	2016	11	21
		2017	--	02
		2018	1	09
Total			**12**	**32**
2	Jehlum Valley	2016	--	--
		2017	03	15
		2018	03	20
Total			**06**	**35**
3	Kotli	2016	21	64
		2017	14	111
		2018	10	82
Total			**45**	**257**
4	Bhimber	2016	04	13
		2017	03	42
		2018	09	20
Total			**16**	**75**
5	Poonch	2016	03	23
		2017	17	48
		2018	05	29
Total			**25**	**100**
6	Haveli	2016	--	--
		2017	10	25
		2018	01	13
Total			**11**	**38**
Grand Total			**115**	**537**

Detail of property damaged by Indian firing at the LOC in Azad Jammu & Kashmir (2016-18)					
Sr. No	District	Year	Houses Damaged	Cattle Killed	Vehicles Destroyed
01	Neelum	2016	16	01	01
		2017	--	--	--
		2018	--	--	--
Total			**16**	**01**	**01**
02	Jehlum Valley	2016	--	--	--
		2017	26	14	00
		2018	29	08	00
Total			**55**	**22**	**--**
03	Kotli	2016	02	--	--
		2017	280	20	11
		2018	--	--	--
Total			**282**	**20**	**11**
04	Bhimber	2016	--	47	01
		2017	00	31	02
		2018	06	29	--
Total			**06**	**107**	**03**
05	Poonch	2016	148	12	05
		2017	165	03	03
		2018	612	18	01
Total			**925**	**33**	**09**
06	Haveli	2016	11	--	--
		2017	34	--	--
		2018	--	--	--
Total			**45**	**--**	**--**
Grand Total			**1329**	**183**	**15**

List of Martyrs due to Indian firing on Loc in year 2016			
District Neelum			
Sr. No	Name of Martyr	Residence	Date of incident
1	Mukhtar Hussain Shah S/O Dilwar Shah	Kharegam	23-11-2016
2	Yonus S/O Yusuf	Lawat	23-11-2016
3	Zubair S/O Yonus	Lawat	23-11-2016
4	Ahmed S/O Sain	Leswa	23-11-2016
5	Ashraf S/O Dawood	Village Dwarian	23-11-2016
6	Rafique S/O Abdul Ahad	Dwarian	23-11-2016
7	Iqbal S/O Abdul Rasheed	Changan	23-11-2016
8	Zahoor S/O Gulab Shah	Aur Syedan	23-11-2016
9	Manzoor S/O Basheer	Nagdar	23-11-2016
10	Muhammad Shafi S/O Safi Ullah	Arang Kel	23-11-2016
11	Muhmmad Shafi S/O Ghulam Mustafa	Dwarian	23-11-2016
District Kotli			
12	Ahmed Deen S/O Noor Muhammad	Goi Barmuch	27-10-2016

List of Martyrs due to Indian Firing on LOC (2017)				
Sr. No	**Name of Martyr**	**Residence**	**District**	**Date of incident**
1	Umiar Khan S/o Ghulam Mustafa	Leepa	Jehlum Valley	21-07-2017
2	Maryum BiBi W/o Imran	Leepa	Jehlum Valley	24-10-2017
3	Samara younis D/o M Youns	Leepa	Jehlum Valley	24-10-2017
4	M Ishfaq s/o M Ishfaq	Khoirata	Kotli	07-02-2017
5	Manzurha Begum W/o M Hussian	Khoirata	Kotli	08-03-2017
6	M Rizwan s/o M Razaq	Charoi	Kotli	11-05-2017
7	Walyat Begum W/o umer Deen	Charoi	Kotli	11-05-2017
8	Waqar younis S/o M Younis	Kotli	Kotli	12-06-2017
9	Asad Ali S/o M Asghar	Kotli	Kotli	12-06-2017
10	Abdul Whab S/o Abdul Razaq	Fathapur	Kotli	28-06-2017
11	Aneeba Jamshiad S/o M Jamshiad	Fathapur	Kotli	08-07-2017
12	M Aliyas S/o Kala Khan	Fathapur	Kotli	19-07-2017
13	Munir Begum W/o M Khaliq	Fathapur	Kotli	07-08-2017
14	M Khursheed S/o Sayian	Khoirata	Kotli	30-08-2017
15	Tosheba Iqbal D/o M Iqbal	Fathapur	Kotli	23-09-2017
16	M Razaq S/o Abdul Khaliq	Fathapur	Kotli	27-09-2017
17	Farzana BIBI W/o Noor Hussian	Barnala	Bhimber	26-05-2017
18	Aamir S/o Munsifdad	Samani	Bhimber	18-07-2017
19	Yasra BIBI D/o M Iqbal	Samani	Bhimber	18-07-2017
20	M. Atique S/O Khlil	Abbaspur	Poonch	
21	Azra d/o M Rashed	Abbaspur	Poonch	
22	Sardar Afzal Ahamed S/o Said Khan	Abbaspur	Poonch	
23	M Shabir Khan S/o Gulab Khan	Abbaspur	Poonch	10-06-2017
24	Fiaza Saleem W/o M Afzal	Abbaspur	Poonch	08-07-2017
25	M Shareef S/o Syian	Hajeera	Poonch	08-07-2017
26	Kalsoom Akhtar W/o Muhammad Altaf	Abbaspur	Poonch	08-07-2017
27	Sasi Begum W/o M Nazir	Hajera	Poonch	08-07-2017
28	M Shreef S/o Ghulam Khan	Abbaspur	Poonch	22-08-2017
29	Momna Khizar D/o Khzar Hayat	Abbaspur	Poonch	02-09-2017

13	Noor Muhammad S/O Lala	Dabsi Fatha Pur	27-10-2016
14	Abdul Majeed S/O Kala	Dabsi Fatha Pur	27-10-2016
15	Latif S/O Bagh Hussain	Dabsi Fatha Pur	28-10-2016
16	Saima W/O Zubair	Mahal Tahri	28-10-2016
17	Amina D/O Qari Shukat	Androth	28-10-2016
18	Abdul ur Rehman S/O Gulzaman	Pali Fatha Pur	29-10-2016
19	Muhammad Shafi S/O Panda Khan	lanjot Fatha Pur	31-10-2016
20	Naik Muhammad S/O Fathe Muhammad	Mohra khamp	31-10-2016
21	Abdul Qayyum S/O Bahdi Khan	Kalanjar Colony	31-10-2016
22	Zeenat W/O Tariq Mahmood	Sandhra Jandrot	31-10-2016
23	Muhammad Imtiaz S/O Maqbool	Sohban Panjti	07-11-2016
24	Azmat bi bi W/O Abdul Rahoof	Oli Fatha Pur	07-11-2016
25	Misri S/O Muhammad Hussain	Bai dhara	07-11-2016
26	Faiza D/O Muhammad Rafi	Brichpal, Chohrai	19-11-2016
27	Areba D/O Muhammad Sagheer	Brichpal Chohrai	19-11-2016
28	Shezad S/O Muhammad Rafi	Brichpal Chohrai	19-11-2016
29	Iqra D/O Muhammad Rafi	Brichpal Chohrai	19-11-2016
30	Nazia W/O Muhammad Aslam	Mithrani	21-11-2016
31	Altaf S/O Lal Muhammad	Dabsi Fatha Pur	21-11-2016
32	Adnan Khalid S/O Muhammad Khalid	Nargul Majhan	23-11-2016

District Bhimber			
33	Sakandar Javed S/O Raja Hafeez Ullah	Bharwa Samahani	26-10-2016
34	Tafoor Shabir S/O Muhammad Shabir	Bharwa Samahani	21-11-2016
35	Atiq Manzoor S/O Manzoor Hussain	Bharwa Samahani	21-11-2016
36	Tanveer Ali S/O Shah Wali	Lakhan paal Dab	14-11-2016
District Poonch			
37	Muhammad Ishfaq S/O Jalal Din	Batal Hajeera	08-11-2016
38	Kalsoom Fatima W/O Zakir Hussain	Mandhol Hajeera	08-11-2016
39	Amina W/O Zakir Hussain	Mandhol Hajeera	08-11-2016

30	M Kashif S/o Sakhi M	Abbaspur	Poonch	04-10-2017
31	Saiqa Sakhi D/o Sakhi Muhammad	Abbaspur	Poonch	04-10-2017
32	Amama BiBi W/o Shiar Wali	Abbaspur	Poonch	14-11-2017
33	Rasheed Mehnas W/O M Khan	Abbaspur	Poonch	17-11-2017
34	M Iqbal S/o Abdul Aziz	Abbaspur	Poonch	07-12-2017
35	Shukat Kiani S/o Deen M	Abbaspur	Poonch	07-12-2017
36	Rozina Begum W/o Rasheed	Hajera	Poonch	26-12-2017
37	Hasan Deen D/o Ghulam Deen	Haveli	Haveli	06-06-2017
38	M Sajid S/o M Akbar	Haveli	Haveli	19-07-2017
39	M Shakeel S/o Abdul Majeed	Haveli	Haveli	22-07-2017
40	M Yousif S/o M Ismahil	Haveli	Haveli	24-08-2017
41	Shekh Naveed Mushtaq S/o Mushtaq	Haveli	Haveli	27-08-2017
42	Ansar Mushtaq S/o Mushtaq	Haveli	Haveli	27-08-2017
43	Asma Mushtaq D/o Mushtaq	Haveli	Haveli	27-08-2017
44	M Zahid S/o Kmal Deen	Haveli	Haveli	29-09-2017
45	Robina BiBi W/o M Imtiaz	Haveli	Haveli	29-09-2017
46	M Deen S/o Kala	Haveli	Haveli	02-10-2017

List of Martyrs due to Indian Firing on LOC (2018)				
No	**Name of Martyr**	**Residence**	**District**	**Date of incident**
1	Asia Bi Bi w/o Haroon Mir	Athmuqam	Neelum	31-12-2018
2	Nusrat BiBi W/o M. Shafique	Leepa/Ghasla	Jehlum Valley	02-08-2018
3	Zulfiqar Ahmed D/o Mehboob Shakh	Leepa/Mohri	Jehlum Valley	17-08-2018
4	Haroon ur Rasheed	Leepa /Batlian	Jehlum Valley	31-10-2018
5	Hasan BiBi w/o Farzand Ali	Khuratta/Kote raha Andrala	Kotli	11-01-2018
6	Dil Muhammad S/o Jan M	Datot bhi Dhara	Kotli	20-01-2018
7	Nafesa Saleem D/o M Saleem	Tarkandi	Kotli	20-01-2018
8	Tasleem D/o M Sadiq	Palai	Kotli	04-02-2018
9	Ayan Zahid S/o M Zahid	Janjot Bhadar	Kotli	19-02-2018
10	M. Farooq S/o Ali Akbar	Mohrha Ghamp	Kotli	23-02-2018
11	Zian imtiaz S/o M. Imtiaz	Dharoti	Kotli	27-02-2018
12	Nazer Husian S/o Mangta	Dhri jandrot	Kotli	01-03-2018
13	Sumera Ismahel D/o M. Ismahel	Bagwala Ianjot	Kotli	07-04-2018
14	M . Sumer S/o Shabir	Ola Panjan	Kotli	26-09-2018
15	Ghulam Nabi S/o Noor M.	Nali	Bhimber	19-01-2018
16	M. Anyat S/o Naik Alam	Nali	Bhimber	21-02-2018
17	Khano BiBi W/o Khadam Hussian	Bagh Harian Nali	Bhimber	28-02-2018
18	Zafar Iqbal S/o Noor Alam	Nahiala	Bhimber	01-03-2018
19	Wazeer Hussian S/o Allah Rakha	Watala	Bhimber	26-04-2018
20	M. Rafique S/o M Shareef	Peer jamal	Bhimber	26-04-2018
21	Ghuftar Hussian S/o Gull M.	Sada Abad	Bhimber	10-09-2018
22	Mahniza W/o M. Waseem	Nali Mohra	Bhimber	02-11-2018
23	Tania BiBi S/o Amanat Ali	Nali	Bhimber	09-11-2018
24	M. kabeer S/o shaker M.	Mandhol	Poonch	05-02-2018
25	Aurangziab S/o Lal M.	Mandhol	Poonch	05-02-2018
26	M. Sarfaraz Imtiaz	Batal	Poonch	15-02-2018
27	Inzamam S/o Ameen	Tetri Not	Poonch	22-02-2018
28	M. Mazafar S/o Alaf Deen	Dhara Shar khan	Poonch	15-05-2018
29	Rafaqat Hussian S/o Zakar khan	Mandhar	Haveli	04-02-2018

Source: SDMA

In 2019, 8 civilians including a boy ,a mother and her two children were killed and 48 wounded after the Pulwama suicide attack on Feb 24.Hundreds of houses, shops and government buildings including schools and hospitals have been flattened during since 1988, and thousands of people have moved to safer areas, leaving their domestic economies in ruins. Others have built bunkers for protection during spells of border fire.

Beyond the immediate loss — destruction of property, business, infrastructure, and the deaths of loved ones — this conflict is also causing mental and physical effects on children, women and the elderly. It has deprived generations of proper education, healthcare and normal upbringing.

The Indians know the Line of Control is densely populated, and yet continue to target these populations, which can only mean one thing: they are deliberately targeting the civilians.

Indian sniper fire in these areas, and the identity of its victims, supports this contention. According to officials, 11 people have been killed or wounded by Indian snipers during 2018 alone.

We have focused this report on victims of sniper firing because it has so far escaped the world's attention. We have gathered information about ten victims, including women, men, children and the elderly. We have found all of them were found to be non-combatant, ordinary people getting on with their lives.

Chapter 2

UN-monitored ceasefire line/ LoC

The UN-monitored ceasefire line dividing the disputed region of Kashmir between Pakistani and Indian-administered areas is one of the most militarised boundaries in the world. Tens of thousands of troops are deployed along this 740km (460-mile) border. The two countries have fought two of their three wars over Kashmir.

A ceasefire brokered by the United Nations to end their first war in 1947-48 led to the division of the region and the establishment of a UN-monitored ceasefire line. Hostilities broke out again in 1965, and then in 1971. Peace negotiations and a subsequent agreement between the two sides in 1972 then led to readjustments of the border and its re-designation as the Line of Control (LoC). The line runs along forested hills and inhospitable terrain. Defying logic in some places, the line splits villages and bisects mountain watersheds. Recently India has fenced the entire border with barbed wire.

Border skirmishes.

Since 1988, when an armed struggle began against Indian rule in the Indian- administered Kashmir, shelling and firing by the Indian soldiers into the Pakistani-held parts, called Azad (free) Kashmir, has become a periodic norm. The weapons used by the Indian troops in these hostilities range from mortars and artillery guns to rockets and sniper fire. While both sides blamed each other for starting the fire, Indian guns almost always hit civilian populations. Except for a few years following a 2003 ceasefire agreement between the two states, there have been regular skirmishes along the ceasefire line.

Chapter 3

United Nations Military Observers group in India and Pakistan (UNMOGIP).

The UN military observers are in Kashmir since January 1949 after the UN-brokered ceasefire between India and Pakistan came into effect on 01 January 1949. India and Pakistan went to first war over Kashmir after its controversial accession became a matter of dispute between the two countries. The war broke out soon after two countries became Independent in August 1947. In January 1948, the Security Council adopted resolution 39, establishing the United Nations Commission for India and Pakistan (UNCIP) to investigate and mediate the dispute.

In April 1948, by its resolution 47, the Council decided to enlarge the membership of UNCIP and to recommend various measures including the use of observers to stop the fighting between the two countries. At the recommendation of UNCIP, the Secretary-General appointed the Military Adviser to support the Commission on military aspects and provided for a group of military observers to assist him.

The first team of unarmed military observers, which eventually formed the nucleus of the United Nations Military Observer Group in India and Pakistan (UNMOGIP), arrived in Kashmir in January 1949 to supervise the ceasefire between India and Pakistan and to assist the Military Adviser to UNCIP.

The tasks of the observers, were to accompany the local authorities in their investigations, gather as much information as possible, and report as completely, accurately and impartially as possible.

These arrangements remained in effect until the conclusion of the Karachi Agreement on 27 July 1949 between the then government of Pakistan-administered Kashmir and Pakistan establishing a ceasefire line to be supervised by UN military observers..

The Karachi Agreement specified that UNCIP would station observers where it deemed necessary, and that the ceasefire line would be verified mutually on the ground by local commanders on each side with the assistance of UN military observers.

On 30 March 1951, following the termination of UNCIP, the Security Council, by its resolution 91 decided that UNMOGIP should continue to supervise the ceasefire in Kashmir.

UNMOGIP's functions were to observe and report, investigate complaints of ceasefire violations and submit its finding to each party and to the Secretary-General.

At the end of 1971, hostilities broke out again between India and Pakistan. In July 1972, India and Pakistan signed the Simla Agreement, defining the ceasefire line as the Line of Control. Both countries still disagree over the UNMOGIP's mandate following the agreement, with India not recognising its jurisdiction after the 1972 accord. India argues that the mandate of UNMOGIP has lapsed after the Simla agreement because it was specifically established to observe ceasefire according to the Karachi Agreement.

Given the discord between both countries over UNMOGIP's mandate and functions, the secretary general has said in the past that the group could be terminated but only through a decision of the Security Council. In the absence of such an agreement, UNMOGIP has been maintained with the same arrangements as established following December 1971 ceasefire.

The tasks of UNMOGIP have been to observe, to the extent possible, developments pertaining to the strict observance of the ceasefire of 17 December 1971 and to report thereon to the Secretary-General.

The last report of the Secretary-General to the Security Council on UNMOGIP was published in 1972. Pakistani military officials continue to lodge complaints with UNMOGIP about ceasefire violations. But, the Indian military has lodged no complaints since January 1972 and have restricted the activities of the UN observers on the Indian side of the Line of Control. They have, however, continued to provide accommodation, transport and other facilities to the group.

Chapter 4

Methodology

While the areas close to the ceasefire line have long been the scene of artillery duels and other heavy weapons battles, sniper fire which nearly exclusively targets the civilians has largely gone unreported and the world doesn't know much about it. In recent months, there has been a surge in such attacks by the Indian troops. 11 people have been killed or wounded by the sniper's bullets during the last one year, four of them in the third week of February 2018 alone.

I spent four weeks along the UN-monitored ceasefire line in Pakistan-administered Kashmir at different times from February to December 2018 to prepare a report on the recent victims of sniper firing. This report is based on in-depth interviews with victims, families of the victims and eyewitnesses.

Five villages – Battal, Tetrinote and Troti in Rawalakote district; and Goi and Chattar in Kotli district –were selected on grounds that they had been the most hit in recent months and most of the sniper victims hailed from these villages. Apart from these villages, Abbaspur town, where a large number of people from Polis and Troti villages have taken refuge, was also included in the study. These villages were among most affected areas before 2003 ceasefire agreement between India and Pakistan.

All of these villages are located right at the ceasefire line, hundreds of yards away from Indian border posts that are clearly visible from the Pakistani side of the border. On-location events and the lengths the local populations go to in order to deal with their pain and trauma were captured. . Military and civil officials were avoided to assess the situation independently.

I went with camera team as close to the ceasefire line as safely possible, and interviewed families whose loved ones had been killed or injured. On two occasions during work It was seen that Indian army firing gunshots from across the border. One of these incidents occurred while interviewing the family of Sarfaraz Imtyaz in Battal village 3 days after the incident. In the second instance, the Indian troops apparently fired two warning shots while filming the abandoned house of the 9-year-old Ayyan Zahid in Chhtar. Two people Ayyan Zahid and Inzamam Amin were shot dead when study was being conducted during the first visit to the ceasefire line in third week of February.

During the interaction some f families who had lost their loved ones to sniper firing from 1992 to 2017 were also wound. .

Chapter 5

Data analysis

At least 870 innocent civilians, including women and children were killed and nearly 3250 wounded during the period 1989 - 2017, according to the figures provided by the officials of the Pakistan administered Kashmir. They were the victims of the Indian mortar/artillery shelling and sniper firing. This does not include the figures for Jhelum Valley, Leepa Valley and Neelum Valley for the period between 1989 to1997 and officials say they are still gathering the details as they lost the record during 2005 devastating Earthquake.. These areas were the worst affected areas before 2003 ceasefire.

According to Pakistan-administered Kashmir's State Disaster Management Authority (SDMA) only in 2018, 31 civilians including 19 men and 12 women were killed , and 173 , including 92 men and 81 women, were injured by the Indian attacks across the ceasefire line.

Seven of them were killed and four wounded by the Indian snipers. Those killed included two school going children – a girl and a boy – three women, a labourer, and a driver. Those wounded included two farmers, a school-going girl and a house wife.

Three people including a child were killed between February 15 to February 22 days after militants stormed Indian army camp in Jammu and killed five soldiers. . In recent years, this is the highest number of sniper victims in 8 days.

Some of them were killed and wounded inside their homes, some at work and some in their schools. This was targeted shooting. Pakistan's foreign ministry says that the Indian forces carried out more than 2312 ceasefire violations along the ceasefire line and the Working Boundary 2018.

Tension along the ceasefire line escalated after the death of a Kashmiri rebel leader Burhanwani in July 2016. Subsequently, chains of anti-India protests spread across the Kashmir valley. The Indian military resorted to brutal tactics to suppress those protests including use of pellet guns, which led to more attacks on Indian forces by Kashmiri militants. .

There is general impression in border areas that India imposes collective punishment them to the happenings in Indian-administered Kashmir.

Observers say there is also correlation between escalation along the ceasefire line and Kashmir valley with Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi's electoral politics in the country.

Chapter 6

Case no.:1

Name: Sarfaraz Imtyaz

Parentage: Muhammad Imtyaz:

Age::32 years

Address:Battal, Rawalakote district, Pakistan-administered Kashmir

Occupation: Driver

Marital Status: Married:

Dependents: Wife, aged parents and 18-month old daughter.

16 Feb 2018: Indian sniper bullet kills cricket enthusiast.

32-year-old Sarfaraz Imtyaz was killed when Indian army opened fire on his van .He was driving five girl students of the Girls Degree College, Mandhol, home when his van was hit near Dharamsal, a village close to UN-monitored ceasefire line in Rawalakot district of Pakistan-administered Kashmir. It was targeted shooting; an Indian sniper fired a single shot from a military post on a ridge overlooking the road. The bullet broke through the front screen of the van and hit him in the chest. He died on the spot. The five girl students and a child on board the van narrowly escaped. His dead body could not be taken home to the nearby Battal village for last rites because of its location within the firing range of Indian military. Instead, the body was taken to the residence of his maternal uncle. He was buried in the courtyard of his house. Sarfaraz was working as labouer in Saudi Arabia for five years before he returned almost one year before his death. He established bought a van and established a sports shop to earn his livings. He was using his van for pick and drop of the students. He was a very good player of cricket. He had won many trophies. He had also set cricket club in his uncle Aurangzeb's name-Aurangzeb Shaheed Cricket Club. His uncle was a Pakistan army soldier who was killed in Kargil war. Occupationally he was a driver. Sarfaraz is survived by his aged parents, his widow and 17-month-old daughter Abiha Sarfaraz. He was married in late 2013 and her daughter was born four years after his wedding. He was very attached to her.

Witness statements

“We were coming from college. When we turned towards Dharamsal, we could see the Indian soldiers. They fired a bullet. I got splinters in my eyes and didn’t know what happened. I turned my face downwards when I heard another girl say that Sarfraz has been hit by a bullet”

Qudsia Majid

Student

Govt. Girls Degree College Mandhole.

“We were going along the route when Sarfraz… (Lowers her head, covers her tears with a hand). When I got up to look, I saw that Sarfraz was profusely bleeding. I started to shout. The other girls also started weeping. Then I got to know that he was hit by a bullet. We started screaming. There was no one close by at first. Then in about 10 or 15 minutes people started to gather and took him away to hospital in a vehicle. Later, we got to know that he had died”.

HaleemaShaheen

Student.

Govt. Girls Degree College Mandhole

“When I brought him (Sarfaraz) to hospital. The doctor examined him, but he was already dead,”

MazharHussain

Local driver

He (Sarfaraz) left me in the morning. He went to drop the girls to school and was martyred. He lived in Saudi Arabia for five years,then he came back and bought a Suzuki van and set up a shop. Now he’s left behind this baby girl. I don’t know what will become of her. She was born four years after Sarfarz’s wedding, and was his only child. He was very happy, but he didn’t know he wouldn’t live for long. Hadn’t he returned from Saudi Arabia, he may have been alive.’

Tafeer Begum

Sarfaraz’s mother

“Somebody called me on phone. ‘My daughter hasn’t come home. Sarfaraz is not back with his rounds of students’. I rang Sarfaraz’s cell number. Somebody by the name Asif attended my call.

Where is Sarfaraz, I asked. He is hit and injured", he replied. I went to a nearby military hospital. I saw that he was succumbed to injuries. He got up early and went to work as usual. I saw him at 11 AM. I went down the hills and saw him driving empty vehicle on the road. He offered to drop me home in his van. I said, son, don't worry, I will go on my own. I remember smile on his face when he looked towards me. My son was very precious. Children these days don't listen much to their parents, but everyone knows that he was very… (A gunshot from the nearby Indian post interrupts our interview). I cannot sleep. I take pills, and still can't sleep. I just keep walking to his grave and back."

Muhammad Imtyaz

Sarfaraz's father.

"It's been seven months since this sports shop was opened. Sarfraz himself was a good cricketer. He had his own club, Aurangzeb Shaheed Cricket Club. Most of these trophies in this shop are his own. And occupationally he was a driver too. He would drive children to school and back. I look after his van and sports shop now."

Amin Ahmed

Sarfaraz's brother-in-law

Case no.2

Name: Ayyan Zahid

Parentage: Chaudhry Zahid

Age: 9 years

Address: Chhtar, Kotli district, Pakistan-administered Kashmir

Occupation: Student:

Marital Status: Unmarried:

Dependents: None:

19 Feb 2018: A Grade-3 boy is killed by the Indian sniper

Indian sniper from across the UN-monitored ceasefire line hit a nine year old Grade-3 boy Ayyan Zahid in his head when he was playing with other children outside his house. The incident took place in the border village of Chattar in the southern Pakistan-administered Kashmir district of Kotli .Ayyan died on way to the hospital. He was studying in a nearby private school. He returned home in the afternoon. He had lunch and went out for playing and lost his life to an Indian sniper bullet. Ayyan's house is right at the ceasefire line. Indian posts are barely a 100 yards away from his house. His family moved to a safer corner of the village after this incident where they live with their relatives. Ayyan's house is abandoned since then. Ayyan's death has left his two sisters and a brother traumatized and his parents devastated.

Witness statement

"He was playing there. There were others too, but he stayed in one place for a while, and that's when the Indian army hit him. The bullet hit him here…….(pointing towards head). I picked him up and carried away from there. Other people also gathered. When we were putting him in van to move him to hospital, he opened his eyes and looked around a couple of times. He was dead less than half way to hospital."

Anas Asif

Ayyan's uncle

Ayan's father is devastated. He was sitting down for condolences being offered by visitors at his relatives house, but was too grief-stricken to offer any comment.

"He went to school in the morning, came back, ate his lunch, and then went out to play with some other children… near the house. They aimed, fired and killed him… from the Indian post in front of our house. Indian army have been targeting our village with mortar and machine guns for years, but this is the first time the Indian sniper killed a child in target shooting. Our children are terrorised and traumatised by all the Indian firing. We are worried for the safety of our children. We don't know if they leave their home in the morning, whether they'll come back in the evening, Sometimes, they can't eat or sleep. The level of fear in this area is such that even a cracker can set panic in a neighbourhood. . We can't take them back to the village. This is no way to bring up children."

Muhammad Kareen

Ayyan's grandfather

"We feel safe when we are inside home. When we go out, we are scared of firing as Indian post is in front of our house. Since the death of my brother, we are terrified. There is no peace in our lives. We have been living in fear. We are scared of going to school. I am a Grade-6 student. Our education is badly affected. We don't know why the Indian army fire at us? We are scared of going back to our home.'

Huma Zara Hooria

Ayyan's elder sister.

Case no.3

Name: Inzamam Amin

Parentage: Muhammad Amin

Age: 21

Address: Tetrinote, Rawalakote district, Pakistan-administered Kashmir

Occupation: Labour

Marital Status: Unmarried:

Dependents: Aged parents, two teenage sisters and a brother.

22 Feb 2018: Indian sniper kills the only son of a family

21-year-old Inzamam Amin was hit by a sniper bullet when he and his father were loading up sand on donkeys from the river in Titrinot village of district Rawalakote..The bullet hit him from behind the left shoulder piercing through the heart and exiting from the chest. He died on the spot. He was the only son of his parents. He had never gone to school. He was born when the cross-border shelling was normal along the UN-monitored ceasefire. He was a big help for his family. Inzamam's village is right at the ceasefire line and within the range of Indian firing. Indian posts are dotted on forested hills and are visible from the village. The river Poonch forms the ceasefire line here. This is the one of the three crossing points, which was opened in 2006 for trade and travel on both sides of the ceasefire line. This village is one of the worst affected by the Indian shelling and firing before the ceasefire in 2003.

Witness statement

“It’s been 30, 35 years that I have been doing this labor on the river. The boy brought for me breakfast in the morning. Suddenly the enemy opened fire. The bullet hit him from behind the left shoulder piercing through the heart and exiting from the chest. He died right there in my arms. Earlier the conditions were good but now they don’t allow us to approach the river. Inzamam was a big help for me in digging up sand from the river which we would sell to earn a living. I have lost him.”

Muhammad Amin

Inzamam’s father

Inzamam's death has devastated his family. His mother Zahin Bibi wails the death of her son.

“Take me there too. I too want to get a bullet”, says his crying mother.

“I was this side of the river, and they were on the other side where they used to work. The lower post did not fire. The post on top fired; they fired some 10 or 12 rounds. And they used a sniper. He was hit by a single round from the sniper gun. It was a deliberate hit.”

Ismail Ishaq

Villager

“This is how our life is; bury one today, another tomorrow, a third one the day after. It has been like this for 70 years now. This is never ending and no solution in sight; not even after the United Nations passed several resolutions and appointed border monitors. Our day begins with someone’s death and ends up with his /her burial. We are born to mourn the death of our loved ones. We have been shouldering coffins of our loved ones for decades now. Indian forces have no regard for human life. All they want is to harm Kashmiris.”

Muhammad Aslam

Inzamam’s Uncle:

Case no.:4

Name: Irij Azad

Parentage: Muhammad Azad

Age:14

Address: Troti, Rawalakote district, Pakistan-administered Kashmir

Occupation: Student

Marital Status: Unmarried

Dependents:

16 Feb 2018: Sniper hit, injures a girl student

14-year-old, Grade-8 student Irij Azad was hit and injured by an Indian sniper bullet at the premises of a private school she studied at. She was hit in her back. The incident took place in Troti village of Abbaspur sector in district Rawalakote. She was moved to Sheikh Khalfa Bin Zayed Hospital Rawalakote, the nearest medical facility. The doctors removed her bullet, but she remained in the hospital for eight days. The village is within firing range of Indian army. This is the first time Indian military attacked this school.

"I was in the courtyard of the school during break time. The Indian soldiers fired a gunshot, but it did not hit anyone. There were two more girls with me. We took shelter in the veranda. Within a few seconds, the Indian soldiers fired a single shot again, which hit me in the back. Our principal, teachers and students gathered around me. All of us were terrified and in a state of panic.

"Some of the students started weeping. Feeling of severe pain made me cry as well. I was moved to the Combined Military Hospital, Rawalakote, the nearest state medical facility. My mother and other family members also came there. The doctors removed my bullet, but I remained in the hospital for eight days. On my return to the school, I appeared in third term exams of my class and obtained second position in the order of the merit.

"Just imagine that I was hit while busy studying in the school. But why had the Indian soldiers targeted me. It's a pity we get education under a perpetual fear of Indian guns."

Irij Azad

Victim

Witness statement

"This incident caused tremendous fear among children and the teaching staff, as it was for the first time that the Indian soldiers had hit our school. We closed the school for a day. We didn't want to take any risks and didn't wish the children's education to suffer either. So the school was eventually shifted to safer premises, at least for the time being."

Faiza Sadaf

Principal

"When my friend was hit by a bullet, she started crying. We all were frightened .Our school lay bare to the Indian guns, being very close to the border. Our principal and teachers tried to console us. They also didn't let our education suffer. We cannot abandon our education for the fear of Indian firing, though we are growing up, having become used to the sounds of Indian bullets and mortar shells."

Humaira Arshad.

Classmate

"We are terrorized and traumatized since our school came under attack. There is no safe place for us. We are not safe in schools. We are not safe inside our homes. We don't feel safe when we go to school or return home. We live an uncertain life. When we leave for school, our parents are not certain we will come back safely, and we are worried about the safety of our parents. They (Indian forces) have snatched our lives from us: they have snatched our books from us.: they snatched away our homes and schools.

Nirmal Zaffar

Grade 4 student

Case no.:5

Name:Amna Miskeen

Parentage: Muhammad Miskeen

Age:13

Address: Battal, Rawalakote district, Pakistan-administered Kashmir

Occupation: Student

Marital Status: Unmarried

Dependents:

18 April 2018: Sniper shoots Grade-7 girl student dead.

A 13-year-old Grade-7 student Amna Miskeen was hit by a sniper bullet hit her in the border village of Battal in district Rawalakote. The bullet pierced through her neck and came out from the chest on the left side. She was targeted when she was performing ablutions for morning prayers in the courtyard of her house. She was taken to a nearby military health facility where they provided 'first aid' and then referred her to the Sheikh Khalifa Bin Zayed Al-Nahyan Hospital Rawlakote. The doctors gave her blood transfusion and and directed her to go to the Combined Military Hospital, Rawalpindi. She died the next day in Combined Military Hospital (CMH), Rawalpindi.

Witness statement

"It was the death anniversary of my father. So we got up early in the morning to make arrangements for the annual ritual. Some relatives and co-villagers had also come early to lend us a helping hand. My daughter was still asleep.

"At about 5.30 am, I gave a shout asking her to wake up for the morning prayers. She woke up in a hurry. She was performing ablution in the courtyard of our house .Her mother told her not to sit in the open fearing that Indian soldiers from the nearby posts on the hill tops may resort to firing. "I am almost done," she replied.

"That was the time when the Indian soldiers fired a shot which pierced through her neck and came out from the chest on the left side. We hurriedly took her to a nearby military health facility where they provided 'first aid' and then referred her to the Combined Military Hospital in Rawalakote. When we reached there, the doctors gave her blood transfusion and directed her to go to the Combined Military Hospital, Rawalpindi.

"We drove for five hours and arrived in Rawalpindi in the evening. She was immediately admitted. They carried out multiple tests and started treatment. They made every effort to make her condition so they could perform surgery on her, but it didn't work. Next day the doctors said that her heart stopped working twice and they pumped it to function. The doctors said that given her condition it wasn't possible to carry out the surgical operation. I wonder how inhuman and cruel it was on the part of the Indian soldiers, who do not spare the children even."

Miskeen Hussain

Amna's father.

Case no.:6

Name: Momina Khizar Hayat

Parentage: Khizar Hayat

Age:04

Address: Polis, Rawalakote district, Pakistan-administered Kashmir

Occupation:

Marital Status:

Dependents:

02 September 2017: Sniper fire kills an orphan girl

4-year-old Momina Khizar Hayat was hit by an Indian sniper bullet inside her house on the annual festival of Eid.An Indian sniper bullet broke through the window pan and hit her in the head, near her eye. She was being rushed to hospital in Abbaspur on a motorbike, but she died on the way. She had put on a new dress with matching bangles ,and had applied henna on her hands to celebrate the occasion. She was an orphan girl. He father had died two years before the incident due to heart attack. The incident took place in one of the worst firing-hit villages, Polis, in Abbaspur sector of district Rawalakot. The Indian post from where the shot was fired is located just a stone's throw away from Momina's house.

Witness statement

"My daughter was sitting on a Sofa inside our house. It was the annual festival of Eid, so she had put on a new dress with matching bangles, and had applied henna on her hands to celebrate the occasion.(While saying this the mother breaks down.)

"She looked very happy on that day. Suddenly, an Indian sniper bullet broke through the window pan and hit her in the right eye. Indian posts are in front of our house, hardly 100 to 150 yards away. She was being rushed to hospital in Abbaspur on a motorbike, but she died on the way. Our Eid turned into a day of mourning. I was utterly devastated. Earlier in the morning, she had been pestering to be taken to her maternal uncle's house, but we ignored her wishes. Had we listened to her and gone there, my daughter might have been alive today.

"We left our home after the incident to live with our relatives in Abbaspur town, which is relatively a safer place. I have two more children – a daughter and a son – older than Momina. My husband had died two years ago due to heart attack. As a result, we now depend for financial support on my father-in-law and husband's brother."

Sameena Jameel

Momina's mother.

Case no.:7

Name: Muhammad Saghir

Parentage: AllaDita

Age: 55

Address: Troti, Rawalakote, Pakistan-administered Kashmir.

Occupation: Farmer

Marital Status: Married

Dependents: Wife, 3 unmarried daughters' and a teenage son

14 March 2018: Two Civilians hit by Indian fire as UN officials run for cover

55-year-old Muhammad Saghir and 53-year-old Muhammad Azam Qureshi, were injured in an attack that took place in the presence of a team of UN observers. They were hit when they were showing a bullet riddled house of a neighbor Saeed Minhas to UN observers. . Muhammad Saghirwas hit in the back, which damaged his backbone, ribs and parts of lungs. This has rendered him paralyzed for life.

Members of the UN team had a narrow escape. The incident took place in the border village of Polis in Rawalakot'sAbbaspur sector. The UN team was in the village to investigate reports of Indian firing on civilian population. They had reached there in two vehicles hoisting UN flag. They left the scene as soon as Indian firing began, and visited hospitals in Abbaspur and Rawalakote where they recorded statements of injured victims. According to local police officials QaziAtrsalan, the UN observers were not expecting firing from the Indian side in their presence. He quoeted them as saying that they had already passed a "hotline message" to the Indian authorities about their visit to the area.

Victim's statement

"UN observers came in two vehicles. They asked us to show them any house hit by Indian bullets. There is Saeed Minhas's house some 200 yards away, which was hit by Indian firing. I took them there. Another villager Muhammad Azam Qureshi was also with me. Some other villagers also joined us. In all we were 15 to 20 people there, some 300 to 400 yards away from the Indian posts situated on hills overlooking the village.

"When they (UN Observers) were filming the house, Indian army soldiers opened fire,. I and Qureshi were wounded. UN observers ran for cover as soon as the firing ensued. I was hit in the back, which damaged my backbone, ribs and parts of lungs. This has rendered me paralyzed for life. The bullet couldn't be removed; it is still there I keep lying on bed all the time. My children look after me.

"Indian posts are very close to our house. In the day, I lie on the bed in the courtyard of our house which is placed behind a tree to protect ourselves from possible Indian firing.

"We are not safe even in presence of UN people. This incident should serve as an eye opener for the UN. They have seen for themselves that civilian population is a deliberate Indian target."

Sardar Muhammad Saghir

Victim

Case no.:8

Name: Fareeda Begum

Parentage: Kaka Khan

Age:25

Address:Nadairi-Goi, Kotli district, Pakistan-administered Kashmir

Occupation: House wife

Martial Status: married

Dependents:

8 August 2018: Indian gunshot kills mother of 18-month child

Indian sniper fired and wounded 25-year-old Fareeda Begum in Goi village of district Kotli. She died in a military hospital in Rawalpindi two days later. She was hit in the abdomen during the pre-wedding henna ceremony of her husband's younger brother, Muhammad Arif. She was married in December 2009 and had her first child, a girl, in January 2014. The victim's village, Goi, happens to be located just a few hundred meters from the ceasefire line and the opposite hills are dotted with Indian military posts. On 22 Jan 1998, her husband's grandfather, Chaudhry Ghulam Hussain, was similarly hit by a sniper's bullet while working in his fields.

Witness statement

"We were busy at the henna ceremony of my younger brother Muhammad Arif that evening. The celebrations were in full swing and several female relatives and family friends were there. There was singing and dancing. They had prepared a henna tray with a lit candle stuck in the centre, as is the custom, and were readying to put henna on Arif's hand. "Suddenly an Indian sniper bullet hit my wife Fareeda Begum in her abdomen. The fire came from there---- (pointing to a nearby Indian army post overlooking the village). Our joy turned into screams of pain. Songs turned into moans. The henna party turned into a pool of blood.

"We moved Fareeda to District Headquarter Hospital in Kotli city where doctors operated on her and the bullet was removed. but her condition did not improve . Doctors referred her to Combined Military Hospital (CMH) Rawalpindi where, after two days, she succumbed to her injuries.

"They [the Indians] turned our celebrations into mourning, and for no reason. We civilians become victims of a malicious Indian army. I feel angry towards India. I was married to my wife for about six years. She was really attached to our child. In 1998, Indian army killed my grandfather with a single shot. We live under shadow of Indian guns."

Tariq Mohammad

Fareeda's Husband

Case no.:9

Name: Chaudhary Ghulam Hussain

Parentage: Muhammad Sain

Age:60

Address: Nadairi-Goi, Kotli district, Pakistan-administered Kashmir

Occupation: Farmer

Marital Status: Married

Dependents:

22 Jan 1998, Indian sniper kills elderly man

The Indian sniper from across the UN-monitored ceasefire line shot dead an elderly man, Chaudhary Ghulam Hussain, in the border village of GoiNadairi in Kotli district of Pakistan-administered Kashmir. He was hit while working in his fields. Eighteen years later, in August 2015, his grandson's wife, Fareeda Begum, was killed in similar fashion.

Witness statement

“I was 20-year-old when an Indian army killed my grandfather. I was studying in college in Kotli city at that time. I was on my way home from college when someone told me about the death of my grandfather. He had gone out in the fields, as was his routine. Suddenly, an Indian sniper from its post in forested hills fired at him. He died on the spot.

“In August 2015, my brother’s wife Fareeda Begum was killed by the Indian sniper. We lost two family members in 18 years for no fault of ours. We live under a constant threat as Indian posts are located close to our house.

“They can open fire any time and kill or wound anyone. We live an uncertain life as we do not know when those trigger happy Indian soldiers will start shooting. They deliberately target civilians. Is it our fault that we live in Kashmir? The UN also failed to protect us and to resolve the Kashmir issue. “We have nowhere to go. This is our home. Our loved ones are buried here. We have been living here for centuries. Since I gained consciousness, i've been hearing gunshots in our area. Generations have come of age hearing the sound of bullets, mortars, artillery guns and rockets. They (the Indian army) target every moving or stationary object. We have no decent life here. We are not certain. We can be alve one moment and dead the next."

Fareed Ahmed

Ghulam Hussain’s Grandson

Case no.:10

Name: Adnan Qayuum Khan

Parentage: Abdul Qayuum Khan

Age: 42

Address: Polis, Rawalakote district, Pakistan-administered Kashmir

Occupation: government employee

Marital Status: Married

Dependents: Wife, four children-a daughter and three sons and aged parents.

10 June 1992: The Indian sniper bullet wounded grade 10 student.

Indian soldiers fired and wounded a Grade-10 student Adnan Qayuum in Troti village in Abbaspur sector of district Rawalakot. He is now 42. He was on the way to Abbaspur town gone with his friends when they came under fire. His friends narrowly escaped. He was hit in his right leg. He has been walking on crutches since then. . In July 2017, his brother ShahidQayuum was wounded when a mortar shell fired by Indians from across the ceasefire line hit their house. Since then Adnan, his parents and four brothers live in Abbaspur town, which is relatively a safer place.

Victim's statement

"There was no metalledroad connecting us with Abbaspur town. I left my village (Polis) with three friends at about 8AM. In half an hour, we were near Troti, when we came under fire from the nearby Indian post on the nearby ridge.

"I was hit in the right leg. My friends escaped narrowly. They carried me to a nearby health facility on their shoulders. They gave me first aid. Then I was moved to Combined Military Hospital (CMH),Rawalakote.

"They shifted me to Rawalpindi. I was treated in different public and private hospitals for weeks together. But my leg rendered useless because of diminished blood supply. I am on crutches since then.

"I was confined to hospital bed, when my grade 10 result was announced. I passed the examination. I was happy and sad, at the same time. I had to discontinue my education. I was on crutches. And the college was far away. I found a clerical job in a government office. My father had meager resources. I started supporting my parents and siblings. I was married in 2004. I have four children, a son and three daughters.

"Indian army would target our village intermittently. On 8 July 2017,. Indian army started intense shelling. Our house was hit by a mortar shell. It was partially damaged. My brother ShahidQayuum was wounded. Rest of the family had a narrow escape.

"In Ramadan (fasting month) Indian forces attacked our village with mortar. My Uncle Shabir Ahmed's house was hit. He died on the spot after being hit by shrapnel.

"In 2001, a mortar shell hit my aunt Safia Begum's house. Her daughter ToibaShaheen (16) was killed. Two more women were killed on the same day.

"All families in our village are affected. Some lost their loved ones, some were wounded or maimed. Many houses were damaged. Many villagers lost their livestock. Or their property destroyed.

. Indian firing also made farming difficult.

"Sometimes the firing was very intense and prolonged. We would wait for intense firing to abate for hours to access hospital. The injured would die due to blood loss. Some of them died on the way to hospital.

“We left our village in 2017 after our house was hit. We now live in Abbaspur town, which is a relatively safer place. We are five brothers and our parents. We live in two rented houses. We had one buffalo, which we sold at a throwaway price.

“The entire population of the polis village, some 2,000 people, has moved to safer places. They now live with their relatives or on their own. Many of them sold their cattle, one of the main sources of their income. The people of our village largely depended on agriculture, cattle raising, day labour or or government jobs. Some are in the Gulf countries to earn a living for their families.

“In 1990s, most people of the village had to move to safer places due to intensified Indian shelling. We returned after several months. After the ceasefire in 2003, people started to rebuild their lives. But peace on the LoC proved temporary. We are homeless once again.”

Adnan Qayuum.

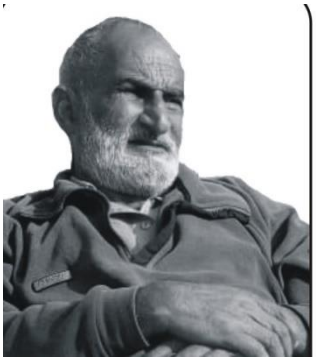
Victim

Victims' Photographs

Sarfaraz Imtyaz

Ayyan Zahid

Chaudhary Ghulam Hussain



Muhammad Saghir

Momina Khizar Hayat

Fareeda Begum

Irij Azad

Amna Miskeen

Inzamam Amin

Adnan Qayuum

Chapter 7

Psychological Impact

Witnessing the traumatic event, the fear of death, of the loss of a loved one or the destruction of property, business and livelihood are factors impacting mental health of people, especially children and women, living close to the UN-monitored ceasefire line in Pakistan-administered Kashmir. Since no survey has ever been carried out, it is hard to quantify the gravity of the situation.

“A few days ago, I examined four people - three women and a man. All of them were from a border village and have temporarily moved to Muzaffarabad where they live with their relatives. All of them were suffering from acute stress disorder (ASD).

“They were not direct victims, but witnessed other people being killed or wounded in Indian shelling. One of the women was continuously crying. She was unable to stop recalling the event she had witnessed. She has developed a phobia of her village and doesn't want to return there. We had to give her medicines to ease her stress. In border town Hattian Baa, District Headquater Hospital receives 3 to 5 patients, mostly women every day with symptoms of ASD.

“If a patient experiences symptoms like these for four weeks, he or she may develop post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). There may be a significant number of people who may have developed PTSD, but we don't have any precise data. The reason for this is that no survey has ever been carried out and very few people visit us for consultation.

“Most of the people who suffer stress may not know what is ailing them, and may ignore it. Others can't travel long distances just to see a consultant. There are only seven psychiatrists in AJK; four of them are serving while three have retired. This is a very small number, and they are based in main cities, far from the villages on the border.

“There is an urgent need to provide the affected populations with psychological support and safe environment so that they can be properly rehabilitated. We need to provide trainings to general health care providers for first aid psychological support and to conduct a survey to assess the extent and gravity of the problem. There should also be an awareness campaign about such conditions.”

Dr. Hamid Rashid Khawaja

Psychiatrist

Chapter 8

Recommendations

1.Immediate end to firing along the UN-monitored ceasefire line and, and ensuring compliance with the 2003 peace agreement between India and Pakistan.

2. UNMOGIP should regular monitor, investigate these violations at LOC and submit the same to UN SG and UN OHCHR and the same should be widely disseminated.

3. UNMOGIP be expanded to ensure effective monitoring of the ceasefire line with the mandate to enforce ceasefire to protect the civilian lives.

4. Ban on use of explosive weapon in the populated areas along the UN-monitored ceasefire line be declared safe zone.

5. Independent probe into the civilian killings along the ceasefire line and ensuring accountability.

6. Even if there is any conflict it must be ensured that civilian lives and property are protected. Civilian population should be helped in building bunkers where they can protect themselves during conflict.

7. Those displaced must be provided shelter, food and health facilities, and education for their children.

8. Those who lost their homes be helped to rebuild the same efforts should be made to reconstruct economy of the affected families by providing income generating assets.

9. People be provided with psychological support. Clinical psychologists/Counselors should be appointed in every school. Psychologists should be involved in framing preventive/rehabilitative measures to deal with the impact of violence on people, especially children and women.

10. Those maimed or disabled be provided with vocational training and sustainable medical and psychological support. .

11. Women be imparted vocational training to generate income.

12. There is need to work for rehabilitation of affected children. Rights of the people, especially children, be guaranteed as per the Convention of Rights of the Child and the law of land.

Author of the report:

Zulfiqar Ali

Zulfiqar Ali is former BBC World Service Correspondent. He washonoured in 2012 with BBC's Global News Award of best reporting in West and Central Asia region. He has also worked for Reuters, the AFP and the Herald. The author has been writing on Kashmir conflict since early 1990s. The author understand politics of both sides of Kashmir as was born and brought up in Kashmir valley before moving to Azad Kashmir.

The author can be reached at bbcmzdk@gmail.com.

Co-author:

Madiha Shakeel

She is a student of International politics and keenly watches developments on both sides of the ceasefire line. She hails from Rawalakote-one of the districts affected by Indian firing.

She can be reached at madiha42356@yahoo.com.